

# WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LIBRARIES AND LEARNING SERVICE SHELVES NEW LIBRARY WITH THE HELP OF COLLECTIONHQ.

**Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning Service consists of 21 branches, 4 mobiles and two village centres and serves a population of over 550,000.** In 2010, the library started using the industry-leading collection improvement solution, collectionHQ.



## THE CHALLENGE

In 2003, discussions between Worcestershire County Council and the University of Worcester started around a partnership which would offer a joint library service both to students and the general public. This library would later be named "The Hive" and would be 2.3 times larger than the building it was replacing, Worcester Public Library. Prior to the opening of The Hive, it was the responsibility of the Library Service's Stock Manager, David Pearson, and his team to ensure that the stock shelving "The Hive" would be sufficient and meet customer demand.

Other challenges facing the library service included developing the collection under tighter budgets and maintaining the collection at a high standard in a time and cost efficient way.

The introduction of collectionHQ has helped the library make more informed purchasing decisions, save staff time and prove a great support in the development of "The Hive's" opening day collection.

## THE OUTCOME

**SUCCESSFUL OPENING DAY COLLECTION** | David Pearson details that the two main objectives when planning the collection for The Hive were "a. that shelves were appropriately stocked on the day of opening with the widest possible choice and b. to maintain the quantity and level of stock subsequent to that opening." collectionHQ was used to support the transfer of existing stock to The Hive as well as the purchasing of new stock and will continue to assist maintenance of that collection.

To decide which stock would be transferred to The Hive, David Pearson and team carried out a major audit using collectionHQ Dead and Grubby tools to identify stock which was no longer generating issues (dead) or which was in a poor physical condition (grubby) therefore would not be shelved at The Hive. David Pearson comments on the dead item removal "anything that had not generated an issue or any interest in the last 12 months was to be discarded – no debate."

Selection of new material for The Hive was to be carried out by the library's main supplier. collectionHQ was used to build the selection specification for that supplier to ensure that the shelves were equipped with the right stock based on the size of the building and evidence of circulation across the library service.

Without collectionHQ, David Pearson explains that he would have had to build the specifications using the library's LMS provider with which he believes he would not have been able to retrieve the same results "I don't think it would have been able to generate the level of data and indicators as to where we should spend money to sustain top collections...this would have required me doing a lot of number crunching which would have taken up a lot of my time and wouldn't be evidence-based as collectionHQ is."



## KEY BENEFITS

The introduction of collectionHQ has helped Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning Service to:

- Plan a successful collection for a new library building
- Save staff time
- Avoid wasteful purchases
- Adopt new marketing techniques



The route taken to develop The Hive has proven to be the right choice as the response to the “quality and quantity” of stock has been very positive and close to 1 million items were issued in the first year.

To maintain this high standard of collection, which shelves 275,000 volumes, the team will use collectionHQ Stock Check tools to ensure all items are on the right shelf and can be accessed easily by customers.

**FINANCIAL SAVINGS** | In addition to supporting shelving at “The Hive”, collectionHQ selection tools have greatly supported purchasing decisions across Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning Service as a whole.

David Pearson comments that staff have been encouraged to use collectionHQ Discovery tools to find out “what is popular locally, regionally and nationally” potentially exposing them to items they were not previously aware of. Analysing popular material helps to build selection lists sent to suppliers and assess which areas are understocked or overstocked, helping to target spending and avoid wasteful purchases.

In addition to saving money through the elimination of wasteful purchases, staff across the library have been able to reduce buying new material in response to demand, and preferring to maximise use of existing items with collectionHQ Transfer tools. David Pearson describes results from the June 2013 dataset that the library has achieved thanks to Transfers “We have transferred 1762 fiction items all of which had been dead on an average of 7.35 months and have since generated 7162 issues over an average of 8.95 months since we started working with the transfer tools in early 2012.”

He continues that smaller service points have found Transfer tools particularly fruitful as those libraries have less access to funds and to new stock “so they are able to use collectionHQ pro-actively and bring in materials they did not have previously which are capable of generating issues.” Increasing the popular author parameter for smaller libraries to 300 has also enabled smaller service points to provide a broader range which has been beneficial for users.

**ENHANCED PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES** | Using collectionHQ dead stock tools have proven to not only be useful for removing non-moving items from the shelves but to highlight areas of the collection that might benefit from heightened promotion. David Pearson provides the example of Non-Fiction material at The Hive, where the public stock can be “dwarfed” by volume of academic stock for the University. “We feel that in many ways we have lost “browsability” at The Hive...so we are encouraging libraries to use dead reports as a means of identifying stock that they can market, promote or display as they like.” Using collectionHQ dead tools in this way not only draws material to people’s attention but maintains a ready supply of stock available for transfer.

collectionHQ’s Marketing module has also proven an effective way of promoting stock. Staff at Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning Service have found the Top Chart tools particularly useful which David Pearson comments “draw people’s attention to authors or titles they might have missed.” He continues that staff use these tools not to promote those obvious areas but parts of the collection that people may not be so aware of: “It is easy to work out top fiction authors but if you run a Top Author chart of large print or children’s then you are not necessarily bringing back authors customers would anticipate...if you run a Top Author chart of large print paperback in a library you will find it looks significantly different from a general fiction Popular Author list and it is beginning to bring a few new authors to our traditional large print readership.” Top Charts is also being used in some libraries at the service to reveal what is popular at that branch and also feature a chart from a different location, exposing new authors and titles that customers may like to read.

**STAFF SUPPORT** | Overall staff at Worcestershire County Council Libraries and Learning Service have been tremendously supportive of the use of collectionHQ and David Pearson comments “they get very enthused by the tools at their disposal to improve services. The work we have been able to do, and the results we have achieved are very much down to them.” To achieve this level of enthusiasm, demonstrating the capabilities and benefits of collectionHQ to staff has been fundamental. Whilst some tools are scheduled for regular work, library staff are given a significant degree of freedom to focus on the areas of stock work that they see as a priority. That is crucial as it empowers them to address their issues and stock priorities. David Pearson concludes “But heaven help anyone who doesn’t print off and action their reports!”

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